

**Remarks/Arguments:**

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 have been amended. Claims 2, 4, 6 and 8 have been cancelled. No new matter is introduced herein. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 are pending.

Claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Schwartz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,241,619). It is respectfully submitted, however, that amended claims 1, 3, 5 and 7 are patentable for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants' invention, as recited by amended claim 1 includes features which are neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record, namely:

...storing one or more candidate words ... a first hypothesis-storage determining criterion when within the word ... a second hypothesis-storage determining criterion when at the word end...

...the first hypothesis-storage determining criterion selects candidate words ... within a predetermined threshold from a maximum value of the recognition score...

...a number of candidate words stored according to the first hypothesis-storage determining criterion when within the word is independent of the second hypothesis-storage determining criterion...

...the second hypothesis-storage determining criterion selects a subset of candidate words ... selected according to a predetermined number of upper ranking recognition scores... (Emphasis Added)

Amended claim 1 is supported in the specification, for example, page 11, line 11 through page 12, line 2 and Figure 4 and 6.

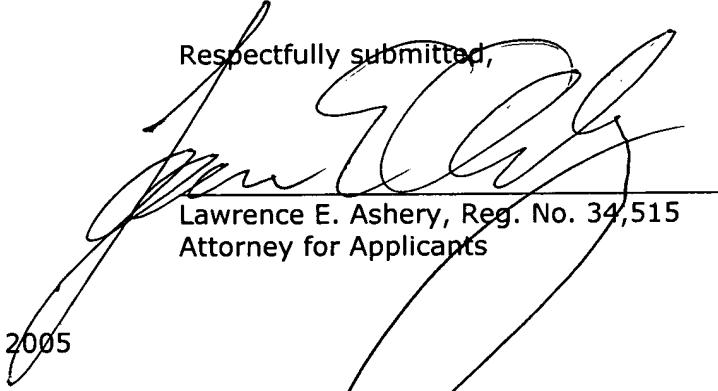
Schwartz et al. disclose a speech recognition system that performs an N-best search. In Figure 4A of Schwartz et al., during a word dependent N-best search, a maximum of n word theories that exceed a threshold are kept. This is performed at any state including the final state. See, Figure 4A, line 5 and 37-41, and Figure 4B, line 41 and 42. Schwartz et al does not disclose nor suggest the features of Applicants' amended claim 1, namely: "...the first hypothesis-storage determining criterion selects candidate words ... within a predetermined threshold ... a number of candidate words stored according to the first hypothesis-storage

determining criterion ... is independent of the second hypothesis-storage determining criterion ..."(emphasis added) In Schwartz et al., the maximum number "n" of word theories to keep is applied at all stages of the processing including when within a word and at the word end. This is different from Applicants' amended claim 1, where the number of candidate words stored when within a word is independent of the criterion for selection when at a word end. Thus, Schwartz et al. does not include all of the features of amended claim 1. Accordingly, allowance of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Applicants' amended independent claims 3, 5 and 7, although not identical, also recite the above features. Again, these features are neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record. Accordingly, these independent claims are also patentable over the cited art of record.

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth above, the above identified application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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